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THE RIGHT FLANK

AT

GETTYSBURG.

AN ACCOUNT OF THE OPERATIONS

OF

GENERAL GREGG'S CAVALRY COMMAND,

SHOWING THEIR IMPORTANT BEARING UPON THE RESULTS
OF THE BATTLE.

BY

WILLIAM BROOKE - RAWLE,

"

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FORMERLY CAPTAIN THIRD PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY AND BREVET LIEUTENANT-COLONEL
UNITED STATES VOLUNTEERS.

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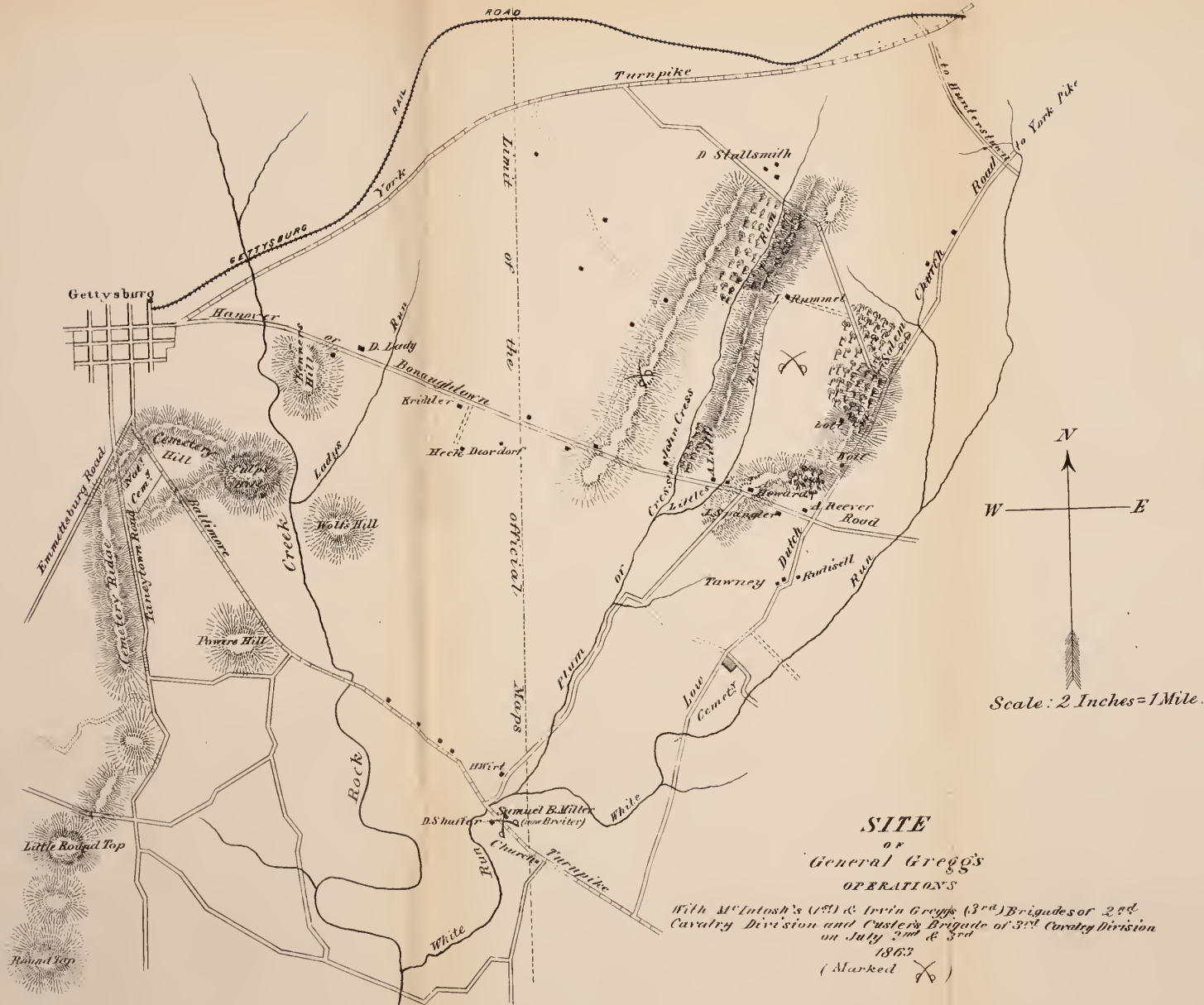
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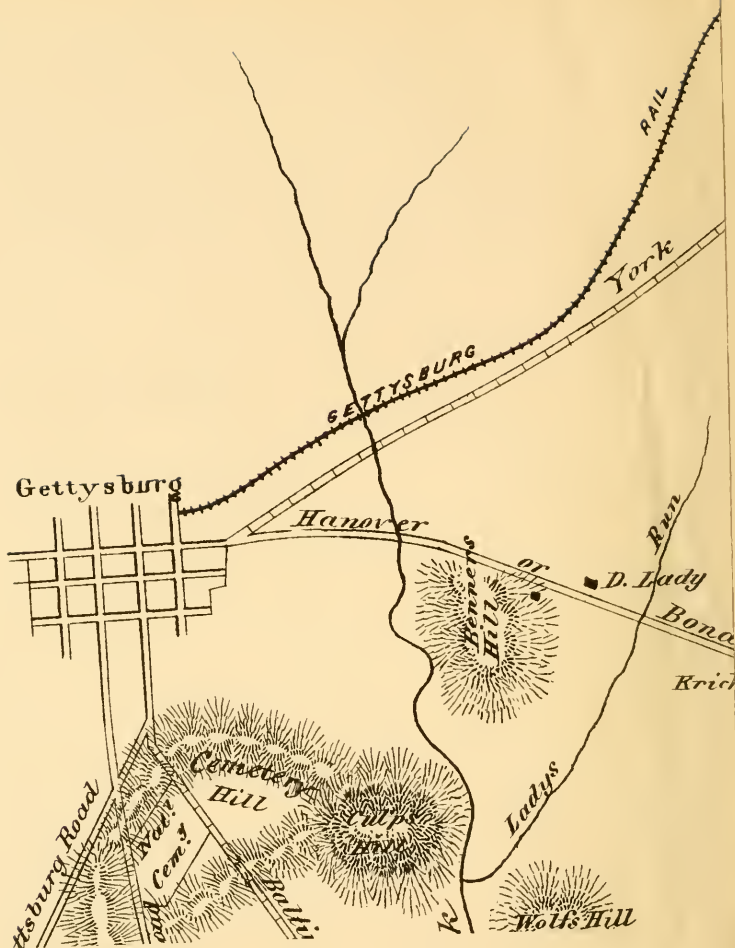
PREFACE.

THE favor with which the following article was received upon its first appearance in "The Philadelphia Weekly Times," of September 14th, 1878, as one of the series of "CHAPTERS OF UNWRITTEN HISTORY IN THE ANNALS OF THE WAR," has suggested its republication. The limited supply of copies printed in pamphlet form from the type of the newspaper became exhausted sooner than was expected, and advantage has been taken of the demand for more, to add a few notes, and to make some slight but immaterial alterations in the text.

PHILADELPHIA, October, 1878.







THE RIGHT FLANK AT GETTYSBURG.

It is but natural that the battle which proved to be the turning-point of the Rebellion should attract more attention, and be more thoroughly studied, than any other. To some, it may seem late in the day to discuss a new phase of that fearful struggle, but to those still living who there "assisted," the whole subject is one of interest.

The "History of the Civil War in America," by the Comte de Paris, has been written to the end of the year 1862 with a degree of ability which is remarkable. In his search for the truth concerning the campaign of Gettysburg for his forthcoming volume, that author has loosened an avalanche of newspaper and manuscript communications, especially from "our friends on the other side," and he may well hesitate before attempting to reconcile the many disputed questions which have arisen. So peculiar do the views of some writers appear to us, that we begin to distrust the memory of those days, and almost to question the general belief that the battle of Gettysburg was a victory for the Union arms. Some might be led to suppose that the dissensions among the Confederate leaders, rather than the ability with which General Meade handled his noble army, brought about the results of the battle. Indeed, it is almost becoming doubtful to the minds of many of the participants in the battle whether they were even present,—so different from their recollections of the events do recent representations appear.

It has been insinuated by a gallant Confederate officer (Major H. B. McClellan, Assistant Adjutant General on the

staff of General J. E. B. Stuart), who, if indeed he were present, might be presumed to have been in a position to judge correctly, that the cavalry operations on the right flank at Gettysburg resulted victoriously for his cause. That this was not the case will be shown conclusively.

But little has been written of the operations of the cavalry during the battle of Gettysburg. So fierce was the main engagement, of which the infantry bore the brunt, that the "affairs" of the cavalry have almost passed unnoticed, yet on the right flank occurred one of the most beautiful cavalry fights of the war, and one most important in its results. It may be confidently asserted that, had it not been for General D. McM. Gregg and the three brigades under his command on the Bonaughtown road, on July 3d, 1863, that day would have resulted differently, and, instead of a glorious victory, the name of "Gettysburg" would suggest a state of affairs which it is not agreeable to contemplate. The neglect with which this portion of the battle has been treated is due, in a great degree, to the want of that self-assertion which was not uncommon among the officers of our Cavalry Corps. The skillful leader, gallant officer, and accomplished gentleman who was in command on the right flank has allowed his modesty and retiring disposition to stand in the way of his claiming for himself and his division the laurels to which they are entitled. The Second Cavalry Division, moreover, was not a favorite among the newspaper correspondents. None of them were attached nominally to its staff, nor allowed in its camps or among its men,—for its commander saw the mischief which they worked. He was appreciated the more for his rule, but there are instances of others thereby gathering in the ephemeral records of the times the glory which he had rightly earned, well knowing that no public denial would come from him. It is but tardy justice which is now being done to him and his command, and the importance of the operations on the right flank was never brought before the public until the recent appearance of Major Carpenter's able article, containing extracts from the official report of the Confederate General Stuart, of infinite importance to the his-

tory of the battle, but which the War Department, for some reason, has hitherto refused to the public.*

General Meade, in his official report of the battle, merely refers to the fact that on the 3d of July "General Gregg was engaged with the enemy on our extreme right, having passed across the Baltimore pike and Bonaughtown road and boldly attacked the enemy's left and rear," and in his dispatches of that date he telegraphed in the evening to Washington: "My cavalry have been engaged all day on both flanks of the enemy, harassing and vigorously attacking him with great success, notwithstanding they encountered superior numbers, both cavalry and infantry." Swinton, in his "Campaigns of the Army of the Potomac," states that "during the action (July 3d) the cavalry had been operating on the flanks—Kilpatrick's division on the left and Gregg's division on the right," and, in a note, "the scope of this work does not permit the recital of the details of the numerous cavalry affairs." And Bates, in his "History of the Battle of Gettysburg," which contains some good material, gives a few lines to an account of the operations on the right flank, correct in the main, but he erroneously locates Stuart with his cavalry on the right of the Confederate line.

In the official maps of the battle-field recently published by the War Department, the responsible duty of designating thereon the positions of the different portions of the contending armies has been assigned to Mr. John B. Bachelder. He also has paid but little attention in his studies of the battle to the operations of the cavalry, but in a memorandum, apparently

* There has existed a wide-spread supposition that Stuart, with his cavalry, was not even present at the battle of Gettysburg. This is partly owing to the fact that after the battles of Aldie and Upperville Stuart became separated from Lee's army, and was prevented from joining it, or from being of any assistance to its commander during its movements preceding the battle, by the interposition of Gregg's and Kilpatrick's cavalry. Stuart was thereby compelled to make a wide detour, only reaching Lee on the 2d of July, and owing to this separation and the loss of the "eyes and ears" of his army, Lee had, to a great extent, to move in the dark. To the fact of Stuart's absence from Lee's army many recent Confederate writers have attributed the results of the campaign, while others maintain that the two brigades under Generals Robertson and Jones, which did not accompany Stuart upon his independent movement, were amply sufficient for the purposes of observation.

accounting for the absence in other places of the Confederate cavalry command of General Stuart, he makes a half-hidden mention of "Gregg's Cavalry" on the maps both of the 2d and 3d of July as being engaged on those days outside the limits of the maps. He has fallen into error even in designating the roads on which those forces met. This may in some degree be owing to the fact that the official surveys from which the maps were prepared have not been extended sufficiently far to the east to cover the field of the operations, though an equivalent quantity of country to the west, upon which no events of consequence occurred, has been included.

Even among cavalry officers a want of appreciation has been shown. General Pleasanton, who, though nominally commanding the Cavalry Corps at the time, was not with any of his divisions, but, according to his own account, near General Meade in the rear of the infantry line of battle, instructing his distinguished chief "how in half an hour to show himself a great general," has recently written an article giving an outline of the valuable services of the cavalry of the Army of the Potomac preceding the battle. He omits entirely to mention the important part it took in the battle itself. Though concluding in a general way with a glowing tribute to its services, it is difficult to ascertain from what he writes whether any portion of the corps of which he was the commander was actually engaged.

And finally, General Custer, who was temporarily serving under General Gregg with his brigade, forwarded independently an official report of the movements of his command, which, in some of its statements, is not entirely ingenuous. In the account referred to he has taken to himself and his Michigan Brigade alone the credit which, to say the least, others were entitled to share.

The story of Gregg's fight has never been told. The task of telling it now has devolved upon the writer, who would have preferred that some other and abler hand had undertaken it. As it is, the following has at least the merit of being written by one who witnessed and participated in the

events which he attempts to describe, and whose comrades are ready to sustain him in that which he relates.

In the movements of the Army of the Potomac after crossing that river in pursuit of the Army of Northern Virginia, the Cavalry Corps of the former, with its three divisions, operated in front and on the flanks. General Buford, with the First Division, took the left flank, General Kilpatrick, with the Third Division, the centre, and General Gregg, with the Second Division, which was the last of the army to leave Virginia, the right flank. This disposition was maintained as well as could be, but when the column of Stuart was struck, Kilpatrick was followed up by Gregg. In the concentration upon Gettysburg, Gregg, with the First and Third Brigades of his division, left Hanover at daybreak on the 2d of July, and about noon took position on the Bonaughtown (or Hanover) road, near its intersection with the Salem Church (or Low Dutch) road, and about three miles from the town. The First Brigade, commanded by Colonel John B. McIntosh, of the Third Pennsylvania Cavalry, consisted, besides his own regiment, of the First New Jersey and First Maryland Cavalry regiments, and Captain A. M. Randol's Light Battery E, of the First (regular) Artillery, four guns. It was temporarily depleted of one-half its strength by the loss of the First Pennsylvania and First Massachusetts Cavalry regiments, which had been detached for service with the Reserve Artillery and the Sixth Corps, respectively. The Third Brigade, commanded by Colonel J. Irvin Gregg, of the Sixteenth Pennsylvania Cavalry, consisted of his own regiment, the Fourth Pennsylvania, First Maine, and Tenth New York Cavalry regiments. In addition to Randol's battery, a section of the volunteer battery belonging to the Purnell Legion was with the division until the night of the 2d of July. This section, in the hurrying movements of concentration, had become separated from its proper command, and had been found, some days before, wandering around the country entirely on its own account. General Gregg took it along with him, and showed it some marching which astonished its fat and sleek horses

and well-conditioned men. The Second Brigade of the division, under Colonel Pennock Huey, of the Eighth Pennsylvania Cavalry, had, on the 1st of July, been sent to Westminster, Maryland, to guard the army trains.

Since crossing the Potomac, on the 27th of June, the column had marched steadily day and night. Previously, it had been on incessant duty since the opening of the campaign on the 9th of June at Brandy Station, and now, having been for many days without food or forage, the division arrived with wearied men and jaded horses upon the field of Gettysburg. Its numerical strength had, moreover, been considerably reduced, for many horses and men had dropped from exhaustion along the road. So much so was this the case that, in some regiments, it became necessary to consolidate the companies, reducing the number of squadrons in each to three or four.

Upon reaching the Bonaughtown road, pickets were thrown out, connecting with the infantry on the left and extending well to the right of the road. The remainder of the command sought a little rest and shelter from the scorching heat, while from the ridges of hills could be seen the conflict between the infantry and artillery of the opposing armies. About seven o'clock in the evening a line of Confederate infantry skirmishers, covering their main column, which proved to be a portion of Johnson's division of Ewell's corps, moved along our front to the attack of Culp's Hill. Screened from the position occupied by the cavalry by Brinkerhoff's Ridge, the enemy were not at first observed by the pickets, but a party of Confederate officers, making a reconnoissance to the summit of the ridge where it crosses the Bonaughtown road, disclosed their approach. The section of the Purnell Battery in position on the road near the Howard house planted two shells in their midst. At the same moment those portions of McIntosh's brigade which were not unsaddled, and which were drawn up near the Little house, mounted and moved forward. Several squadrons of the Third Pennsylvania and First New Jersey plunged down the hill and across Cress' Run, then dismounted and deployed at the double quick. Coming to the summit of Brinkerhoff's Ridge, the enemy's line of infantry was observed approaching also at a run.

Along the summit there was a strong stone wall, which each party at once saw would command possession of the field, and each redoubled its efforts to secure it. The cavalymen, however, reached it first—the enemy being but some ten yards off—and poured in a volley from their carbines which checked the advance of their adversaries. The enemy, after some ineffectual attempts to take the wall, retired to a more sheltered position about two hundred yards off, and heavy firing was kept up until after nightfall. In the meantime, some of the artillery with the division was employed upon the columns of the enemy's infantry, which could be seen moving toward Culp's Hill in support of the bloody struggle for its possession. About ten o'clock in the evening, in accordance with orders from headquarters, General Gregg withdrew the skirmish line, substituting a picket line from the First New Jersey, and moved his command over to the Baltimore pike, where it took position on the south side of White Run, in the rear of the Reserve Artillery, and remained there during the night.*

On the morning of July 3d, General Gregg was directed to resume his position on the right of the infantry line, and make a demonstration against the enemy. Finding General Custer's brigade of the Third Cavalry Division occupying his position of the previous day on the Bonaughtown road, Gregg placed his two brigades to the left of Custer's line, covering the right of the Twelfth Corps. A regiment was dismounted and deployed for some distance into the woods without finding anything in front. Scarcely had this been done, however, when about noon a dispatch from the commander of the Eleventh Corps to General Meade was placed in General Gregg's hands, notifying him that a large body of the enemy's cavalry had been observed from Cemetery Hill moving toward the right of our line. At the same time an order from General Pleasanton, commanding the Cavalry Corps, was received, directing that Custer's brigade should at once join its division (Kilpatrick's) on the left. Accordingly, McIntosh's brigade was ordered to relieve Custer's, and to occupy his position on the

* This position is within the limits of the official maps, but no mention is made of the two brigades thereon.

right of the Bonaughtown road west of the Salem Church road.

In order to appreciate the positions of the opposing forces, it becomes necessary to examine the official report of General J. E. B. Stuart, now in the possession of the War Department, but which has never been published in full. After mentioning that his advance (Hampton's brigade) had arrived in the vicinity of Gettysburg on July 2d, just in time to repulse an attempt by our cavalry (under Kilpatrick) to reach the rear of the Confederate line by way of Hunterstown, Stuart proceeds to state that he took position on the York and Heidlersburg roads. On the morning of the 3d he moved forward to a new position to the left of General Ewell's left, and in advance of it, where, from the elevated ground, there was a view of the country for many miles. He was thus enabled to render Ewell's left secure, and at the same time to command a view of the routes leading to the rear of our lines. His purpose, he states, was to effect a surprise on the rear of our main line of battle. It is obvious that he intended to accomplish this by way of the Baltimore pike, and the roads hereafter described, simultaneously with Pickett's attack in front. In the concentration of his forces for this object, however, Hampton's and Fitzhugh Lee's brigades, as he further states, unfortunately debouched into open ground, disclosing the movement, and causing the corresponding movement of a large force of our cavalry, and to this Stuart attributes his want of success. Although checked in his original design, nevertheless, he adds: "Had the enemy's main body been dislodged, as was confidently hoped and expected" (by Pickett's charge), "I was in precisely the right position to discover it and improve the opportunity. I watched keenly and anxiously the indications in his rear for that purpose, while in the attack which I intended (which was forestalled by our troops being exposed to view), his cavalry would have separated from the main body, and gave promise of solid results and advantages."

Stuart acknowledges that the position which he held was very strong, and he is fully justified in his description of it. A country cross-road branches off from the York turnpike

about two and a half miles from Gettysburg, and runs in a south-easterly direction toward the Salem Church road, which connects the York and Baltimore turnpikes. About half the distance to the Salem Church road, and a mile from it, the road crosses Cress' Run, and then rises to the ridge mentioned by Stuart and known as Cress' Ridge. A moderately thick piece of woods on the right ends at the crest of the ridge, affording protection and cover to the supports of the battery which was subsequently placed there. Screened by the piece of woods, and on the opposite side of the cross-road, is a large open space on the Stallsmith farm, which enabled the Confederate leader to mass and manœuvre his cavalry without its being observed from our position.

Gregg's position was as inferior to Stuart's as the general line occupied by the main body of the Army of Northern Virginia was to that occupied by the Army of the Potomac. As Stuart says, the whole country for miles lay at his feet. The Salem Church road crosses the Bonaughtown road nearly at right angles, about three and a half miles south-east of Gettysburg, at the Reeve house, and continues on about two miles further until it reaches the Baltimore pike about one and three-fourths miles south-east of its crossing over Rock Creek and the rear of centre of our main line of battle.* About three-fourths of a mile north-east from the intersection of the Salem Church and Bonaughtown roads, the cross-road above mentioned branches off to the north-west towards Stuart's position and the York pike. A piece of woods, which, since the battle, has been reduced in extent, covered the intersection of the Salem Church road and the cross-road on the side toward the enemy's position, extending about equidistant on each road from a lane leading down to John Rummel's house and farm

* A country road, parallel with the Salem Church road, and from a half mile to a mile nearer Gettysburg, runs from the Bonaughtown road, at the Howard house, along the valley of Cress' Run, and strikes the Baltimore pike by the bridge over White Run, less than a mile south-east of the bridge over Rock Creek, near which latter, by Powers' Hill, were the Reserve Artillery and the ammunition trains. This, being a more direct one than the Salem Church road, was used by our troops for operating between the Baltimore pike and the Bonaughtown road, and consequently the rear of our main line of battle was even more accessible by this than by the road above described.

buildings on the north to the Lott house on the south, a total distance of about a half mile or more. One side of this woods faced the north-west and the enemy's position. Between the ridge on which the Reeve house stands, and along which the Salem Church road runs, and the higher ridge occupied by Stuart, is a small creek, known as Little's Run, starting from the spring-house at Rummel's. The Rummel farm buildings eventually became the key-point of the field, which lies about three miles east of Gettysburg.

The force under Gregg numbered about five thousand men, though not more than three thousand were actually engaged in the fight which occurred on the ground described. It consisted of the three regiments of McIntosh's brigade, Irvin Gregg's brigade and Custer's brigade, which, as will appear, remained on the field. This last, known as the "Michigan Brigade," was composed of the First, Fifth, Sixth and Seventh Michigan Cavalry regiments, commanded by Colonels Town, Alger, Gray and Mann, respectively, and Battery M of the Second (regular) Artillery, commanded by Lieutenant A. C. M. Pennington. On the other hand, Stuart had with him, as he states in his report, Hampton's, Fitzhugh Lee's and W. H. F. Lee's brigades of cavalry, to which was added, for the proposed movements of the day, Jenkins' brigade of cavalry armed as mounted infantry with Enfield muskets. This entire force has been estimated by reliable Confederate authority at between six thousand and seven thousand men.*

When McIntosh, with his command, came upon the ground shortly before one o'clock, for the purpose of relieving Custer, he found the latter in position facing Gettysburg, near the junction of the Bonaughtown and Salem Church roads, and covering them. In his official report of the battle, Custer

* It seems, however, that a disinterested and, therefore, more reliable, authority—the Comte de Paris—has estimated the numbers of the Confederate cavalry at from one-third to one-half greater than the numbers given above. It has been well said by a recent writer, referring to the statement made by Stuart in his report that the detachment of two brigades which did not accompany him into Pennsylvania was strong in point of numbers: "As a rule, the forces on the Southern side are made out to be so nearly non-existent that one thinks of them as a shadowy army, like the ghostly troops which passed before the Emperor in the French picture of the '*Revue des Morts*.'"

mistakes the names of the roads on which he held position. He erroneously calls the Hanover or Bonaughtown road the *York* pike, and the Salem Church road the *Oxford* road. He states, however :

“ At an early hour on the morning of the 3d, I received an order, through a staff officer of the brigadier-general commanding the division, to move at once my command and follow the First Brigade on the road leading from Two Taverns to Gettysburg. Agreeably to the above instructions, my column was formed and moved out on the road designated, when a staff officer of Brigadier-General Gregg, commanding Second Division, ordered me to take my command and place it in position on the pike leading from *York* to Gettysburg, which position formed the extreme right of our battle on that day. Upon arriving at the point designated, I immediately placed my command in position, facing toward Gettysburg. At the same time I caused reconnoissances to be made on my front, right and rear, but failed to discover any considerable force of the enemy. Everything remained quiet till 10 A M., when the enemy appeared on my right flank and opened upon me with a battery of six guns. Leaving two guns and a regiment to hold my first position and cover the road leading to Gettysburg, I shifted the remaining portion of my command, forming a new line of battle at right angles to my former line. The enemy had obtained correct range of my new position, and were pouring solid shot and shell into my command with great accuracy. Placing two sections of Battery M, Second (regular) Artillery, in position, I ordered them to silence the enemy's battery, which order, notwithstanding the superiority of the enemy's position, was successfully accomplished in a very short space of time. My line, as it then existed, was shaped like the letter L, the shorter branch formed of the section of Battery M, supported by four squadrons of the Sixth Michigan Cavalry, faced toward Gettysburg, covering Gettysburg pike ; the long branch composed of the remaining two sections of Battery M, Second Artillery, supported by a portion of the Sixth Michigan Cavalry, on the right, while the Seventh Michigan Cavalry, still further to the

right and in advance, was held in readiness to repel any attack the enemy might make coming on the *Oxford* road. The Fifth Michigan Cavalry was dismounted and ordered to take position in front of my centre and left. The First Michigan Cavalry was held in columns of squadrons to observe the movements of the enemy. I ordered fifty men to be sent one mile and a half on the *Oxford* road, while a detachment of equal size was sent one mile and a half on the road leading from Gettysburg to *York*, both detachments being under the command of the gallant Major Webber, who from time to time kept me so well informed of the movements of the enemy that I was enabled to make my dispositions with complete success.

“At twelve o’clock an order was transmitted to me from the brigadier-general commanding the division, by one of his aids, directing me, upon being relieved by a brigade from the Second Division, to move with my command and form a junction with the First Brigade on the extreme left. On the arrival of the brigade of the Second Division, commanded by Colonel McIntosh, I prepared to execute the order.”

The remaining portions of his account require re-statement for reasons already mentioned.

Upon notifying Custer of the orders to relieve him, McIntosh inquired as to his picket line and the position and force of the enemy. Nothing was said as to any previous firing, and everything was quiet at the time. Custer reported, however, that the enemy were all around, and that an attack might be expected at any moment from the right and rear. The First New Jersey, under Major Beaumont, was at once ordered out mounted to relieve Custer’s lines, and took position in the woods on the Salem Church road, facing to the north-west. The Third Pennsylvania, under Lieutenant-Colonel Jones, and First Maryland, under Lieutenant-Colonel Deems, were drawn up in close columns of squadrons in a clover-field west of the Lott house, awaiting developments. While in this position, and a few minutes after one o’clock, the tremendous artillery firing which preceded Pickett’s attack commenced. Not being in the line of fire, however, the offi-

cers and men of the brigade, while allowing their horses to graze, looked with amazement upon the magnificent spectacle.

As soon as the Michigan Brigade had withdrawn from the field for the purpose of joining Kilpatrick near Round Top, McIntosh, who had looked well over the ground, determined to ascertain what force was in his front without waiting to be attacked. Accordingly, about two o'clock he ordered Major Beaumont to deploy a strong skirmish line of the First New Jersey, and move it forward, under Major Janeway, towards the wooded crest about half a mile in front of him and a short distance beyond Rummel's, expecting there to find the enemy. This movement was a signal for the deployment of a skirmish line from Rummel's barn, where a strong picket force had been concealed, and which at once occupied a line of fences a short distance to the south. The First New Jersey, which had reached a stone and rail fence parallel with that occupied by the enemy, was dismounted and reinforced from the woods, and immediately became hotly engaged. Two squadrons of the Third Pennsylvania, under Captains Treichel and Rogers, were deployed dismounted to the left in the open fields, and another squadron of the same regiment, under Captain Miller, deployed mounted to the extreme right of the whole line, in the woods covering the cross-road above mentioned, which ran toward the enemy's position.* One squadron of the First New Jersey, under Captain Hart, remained drawn up mounted in the woods, in support of the line. To meet this movement the Confederate skirmish line was strongly reinforced from the woods by dismounted men, and a battery was placed in position on the wooded crest back of the Rummel house and to the left of the cross-road.

The Confederate battery now opened fire, and McIntosh sent back for Randol and his guns, at the same time informing General Gregg of the state of affairs, that he was engaged with a greatly superior force, and requesting that Colonel Irvin Gregg's brigade be sent up at the trot to support him. That brigade was yet some distance off, and Gregg, meeting

* Captain Walsh's squadron of the Third Pennsylvania had been sent out on picket duty still further to the right, but was not actively engaged in the fight.

Custer on the march in the opposite direction, ordered him to return and reinforce McIntosh, and to remain on the ground until the Third Brigade could be brought up. Custer, ever ready for a fight, was not loth to do so. Wheeling his column about, he moved up at once to McIntosh's support, and General Gregg coming upon the field took command of the forces. In the meantime the enemy attempted to force our lines on the right, but their charge was gallantly repulsed by Miller's squadron of the Third Pennsylvania and Hart's squadron of the First New Jersey in the woods.

The enemy having filled the large barn at Rummel's with sharpshooters,—who, while picking off our men, were completely protected from our fire,—Captain Randol, upon coming on the ground, placed a section of his battery of three-inch light ordnance guns, under Lieutenant Chester, in position, well to the front, on the edge of an orchard, some distance to the left and beyond the Reeve house, and opened upon it. Shell after shell struck the building, soon compelling the enemy to abandon it, and as they did so, the centre of our line advanced and occupied the enemy's line of fences and some of the outbuildings. Having thus pierced their line, a force was sent out to take the enemy in flank, while the left centre moved up to the line of fences, driving back the portions of Jenkins' brigade which had occupied it. This movement caused the left of the enemy's line, held by portions of Hampton's and Fitzhugh Lee's brigades dismounted, to give way also, and their position was at once taken. The left, the centre, and the right centre of our line was thus advanced, while the right still rested on the woods on the cross-road, and the Sixth Michigan went into position along Little's Run, on the left rear of Treichel's and Rogers' squadrons, occupying the space thus opened, at the same time extending to the left so as to cover the Bonaughtown road. Pennington's battery of six guns, upon arriving on the ground, went into position on the side of the Bonaughtown road, a short distance west of the Spangler house and about two hundred and fifty yards to the left and rear of Chester's section. Between the two, Randol placed his second section, under Lieutenant Kinney, of the First Connecticut Heavy Artillery, an officer

of the Reserve Artillery staff, who had volunteered to serve with the battery. By the accuracy of their firing and superior range, Randol's guns soon silenced the enemy's battery on the crest beyond Rummel's near the cross-road, and Pennington's, some guns in position more to our left.

When the ammunition of the First New Jersey and Third Pennsylvania was becoming exhausted, the Fifth Michigan, armed with Spencer repeating carbines, was ordered to relieve them, and moved up, dismounted, to the front, along a fence which intersected the field lengthwise running at right angles to the skirmish line. The left came up to the line occupied by Treichel's and Rogers' squadrons of the Third Pennsylvania, behind a fence which was slightly retired from that occupied by the First New Jersey; but before the right could reach the more advanced fence occupied by the First New Jersey, a dismounted regiment from W. H. F. Lee's brigade advanced in line to the support of the enemy's skirmishers, who were about to be cut off by the detachment sent out from Rummel's, and made a terrific onslaught along the line. Treichel's and Rogers' squadrons of the Third Pennsylvania, and that portion of the Fifth Michigan which had reached their line, held the ground stubbornly. After a while, when the fire had slackened, Treichel and Rogers, who had been ordered to retire when the Fifth Michigan came up, endeavored to withdraw their men. The enemy, believing it a signal of retreat, advanced. The Third Pennsylvanians came back upon the line, and again and again this was repeated.

The First New Jersey remained at the line of fences until the last cartridge was used and the last pistol emptied, and then fell back upon the supports in the woods. This movement was taken advantage of by the enemy, and the First Virginia was ordered forward for a mounted charge upon our right centre. As it was seen to start, McIntosh rode over quickly to the Lott house, where he had left the First Maryland prepared for such an emergency. Gregg, however, upon coming on the field had moved the regiment over to the right of the Salem Church road, to guard more effectually that important quarter. The Seventh Michigan, which was to take its place, was just then coming on the field from the direction

of the Reeve house in column of fours. Custer, who was near, also saw the emergency, ordered close column of squadrons to be formed at the gallop, and advanced with it to meet the attack.

As the First New Jersey fell back, the right of the two Third Pennsylvania squadrons, and that portion of the Fifth Michigan which had reached them, swung back behind the fence which ran parallel with the line of the charging column, and intersecting the field lengthwise.

The Seventh Michigan, a new regiment, advanced boldly to meet the First Virginia, but on coming up to the stone and rail fence, instead of pushing across it, began firing with their repeating carbines. The First Virginia came on in spite of the heavy fire until it reached the fence from the other side. Both regiments fought face to face across the fence with their carbines and revolvers, while a scorching fire was centred upon the First Virginia from either flank. The enemy's dismounted line also came up, and assisted the First Virginia to pass the fence, whereupon the Seventh Michigan gave way in disorder, the enemy following in close pursuit.

The First Virginia becoming strung out by this movement, was exposed to a terrific fire from the two batteries in front, and the heavy skirmish lines on the flanks, while some of the Fifth Michigan, who had succeeded in mounting, advanced to assist the Seventh. It was more than even their gallantry could stand, and the First Virginia fell back on the supports which were fast advancing to its assistance. This was about three o'clock.

Just then there appeared in the distance, turning the point of woods on the cross-road by the Stallsmith farm, a brigade of cavalry. It was manifest to every one that unless this, the grandest attack of all, was checked, the fate of the day would be decided against the Army of the Potomac. It was Stuart's last reserve and his last resource, for, if the Baltimore pike was to be reached and havoc created in our rear, the critical moment had arrived, as Pickett was even then moving up to the assault of Cemetery Ridge.

In close columns of squadrons, advancing as if in review, with sabres drawn and glistening like silver in the bright sun-

light, the spectacle called forth a murmur of admiration. It was indeed a memorable one. Chester, being nearest, opened at once with his section, at the distance of three-fourths of a mile. Pennington and Kinney soon did the same. Canister and percussion shell were put into the steadily approaching columns as fast as the guns could fire. The dismounted men fell back to the right and left, and such as could got to their horses. The mounted skirmishers rallied and fell into line. Then Gregg rode over to the First Michigan, which, as it had come upon the field some time before, had formed close column of squadrons between and supporting the batteries, and ordered it to charge. As Colonel Town ordered sabres to be drawn and the column to advance, Custer dashed up with similar orders and placed himself at its head. The two columns drew nearer and nearer, the Confederates outnumbering their opponents as three or four to one. The gait increased—first the trot, then the gallop. Hampton's battle-flag floated in the van of the brigade.* The orders of the Confederate officers could be heard by those in the woods on their left: "Keep to your sabres, men! keep to your sabres!" for the lessons they had learned at Brandy Station and at Aldie had been severe. There the cry had been: "Put up your sabres! Draw your pistols and fight like gentlemen!" But the sabre was never a favorite weapon with the Confederate cavalry, and now, in spite of the lessons of the past, the warnings of the present were not heeded by all.

As the charge was ordered, the speed increased, every horse on the jump, every man yelling like a demon. The columns of the Confederates blended, but the perfect alignment was maintained. Chester put charge after charge of canister into their midst, his men bringing it up to the guns by the armful. The execution was fearful, but the long rents closed up at once. As the opposing columns drew nearer and nearer, each with perfect alignment, every man gathered his horse well under him and gripped his weapon the tighter. Though ordered to retire his guns, towards which the head

* Stuart, in his official report, states that this force consisted of the First North Carolina Cavalry and Jeff Davis Legion, but that gradually the greater portion of his command became involved in the hand-to-hand fighting.

of the assaulting column was directed, Chester kept on until the enemy were within fifty yards, and the head of the First Michigan had come into the line of his fire. Staggered by the fearful execution from the two batteries, the men in the front line of the Confederate column drew in their horses and wavered. Some turned, and the column fanned out to the right and left, but those behind came pressing on. Custer, seeing the front men hesitate, shouted, "Come on, you Wolverines!" and with a fearful yell the First Michigan rushed on, Custer four lengths ahead.

McIntosh, as he saw the Confederate column advancing, sent his Adjutant-General, Captain Walter S. Newhall, to the left, with orders to Treichel and Rogers to rally their men for a charge on the flank as it passed. But sixteen men could get their horses, and with five officers they made for the battle-flag. Newhall, back once more with the men of his own regiment, who, as he knew well, would go anywhere, and sharing the excitement of the moment, rushed in by the side of Treichel and Rogers at the head of the little band. Miller, whose squadron of the Third Pennsylvania was already mounted and had rallied, fired a volley from the woods on the right as the Confederate column passed parallel with his line but one hundred yards off, and then, with sabres drawn, charged down into the overwhelming masses of the enemy.

The small detachment of the Third Pennsylvania under Treichel and Rogers struck the enemy first, all making for the color-guard. Newhall was about seizing the flag when a sabre blow, directed at his head, compelled him to parry it. At the same moment the color-bearer lowered his spear and struck Newhall full in the face, tearing open his mouth and knocking him senseless to the ground. Every officer and nearly every man in the little band was killed or wounded, although some succeeded in cutting their way clear through. Almost at the same moment Miller, with his squadron of the Third Pennsylvania, struck the left flank about two-thirds of the way down the column. Going through and through, he cut off the rear portion and drove it back past Rummel's almost up to the Confederate battery, and nothing but the

heavy losses which he had suffered and the scattering of his men prevented his going further, wounded though he was.

In the meantime the heads of the two columns had met—the one led by Hampton and Fitz Lee, (for he, too, was there,) and the other by Custer—and were fighting hand to hand. McIntosh, with his staff and orderlies, and such scattered men from the Michigan and other regiments as he could get together, charged in with their sabres. For minutes, which seemed like hours, amid the clashing of the sabres, the rattle of the small arms, the frenzied imprecations, the demands to surrender, the undaunted replies and the appeals for mercy, the Confederate column stood its ground. Captain Thomas of the staff, seeing that a little more was needed to turn the tide, cut his way over to the woods on the right, where he knew he could find Hart, with his fresh squadron of the First New Jersey. In the melee, near the colors, was an officer of high rank, and the two headed the squadron for that part of the fight. They came within reach of him with their sabres, and then it was that Wade Hampton was wounded.

By this time the edges of the Confederate column had begun to fray away, and the outside men to turn back. As Hart's squadron, and the other small parties who had rallied and mounted, poured down from all sides, the enemy turned. Then followed a pell-mell rush, our men in close pursuit. Many prisoners were captured, and many of our men, through their impetuosity, were carried away by the overpowering current of the retreat.*

The pursuit was kept up past Rummel's, and the enemy were driven back into the woods beyond. The line of fences and the farm buildings, which constituted the key-point of the field, and which, in the beginning of the fight, had been in the possession of the enemy, remained in ours until the end. All serious fighting for the day was over, for Pickett's

* The successful result of this magnificent cavalry charge was attributed by the victors to the steadiness and efficiency with which they used the sabre *en masse*, against greatly superior numbers, many of whom had exchanged that weapon for the revolver. It should be a strong point, in the present discussions, in favor of the retention of the sabre as a cavalryman's weapon.

simultaneous assault had also been repulsed, and the victory along the line was complete. Skirmishing, and some desultory artillery firing, was kept up at intervals by both forces until after nightfall, these disturbances being caused by the enemy's endeavors to recover their killed and wounded, who were lying thickly strewn over the field in our possession. At dark Stuart withdrew to the York pike, preparatory to covering the retreat of Lee's army towards the Potomac. In the evening Custer's brigade was ordered to join its division. Gregg remained all night in possession of the field, and in the morning started in pursuit of the retreating enemy.

The losses of the Confederate cavalry were unmistakably heavy, but have not been ascertained. General Gregg reported the losses in his division to be one officer and thirty-three enlisted men killed, seventeen officers and forty enlisted men wounded, and one officer and one hundred and three enlisted men missing—total, one hundred and ninety-five. These losses were suffered principally by the Third Pennsylvania and First New Jersey Cavalry regiments, which had borne the brunt of the fighting of the division. By the time the Third Brigade had come up, the Michigan Brigade had gotten so deeply into the fight that it could not be withdrawn. The Third Brigade had consequently been held in reserve close at hand during the fight, drawn up in position south of the Bonaughtown road on either side of the Salem Church road.

Custer in his official report stated his losses to be nine officers and sixty-nine enlisted men killed, twenty-five officers and two hundred and seven enlisted men wounded, and seven officers and two hundred and twenty-five enlisted men missing—total, five hundred and forty-two.

It has been claimed that Gregg's fight at Gettysburg was the finest cavalry fight of the war. To borrow the language of Custer in his report of it: "I challenge the annals of warfare to produce a more brilliant or successful charge of cavalry than the one just recounted."





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